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ACTION OFFICE NEA-03

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VBN-01 VBR-01 /024 AS 15

P 300530Z JUL 86

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUENIA/USIA WASHDC PRIORITY 4686

INFO RUENI/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5477

RUENI/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5051

RUFNOL/AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY 2028

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 16286

USIA

FOR P/G, P/DH, NEA

SECSTATE FOR NEA/PAB - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. NINTON
AND NEA AMB. DUNBAR

E.O. 12356: OADR

SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT: US CONSULTANTS' VISIT

1. SUMMARY. THE SEVEN DAY VISIT (JULY 22-28) TO ISLAMABAD AND PESHAWAR BY NEARST'S CHARLES SHUTT AND BU'S JOACHIM MAITRE STIMULATED SUBSTANTIAL FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THE MEDIA PROJECT ON THE PAKISTANI SIDE, ACCOMPLISHED THE FIRST CONCRETE STEPS OF HARRING THE AMERICAN AND PAKISTANI CONCEPTS OF THE PROJECT, AND BROUGHT US FACE TO FACE WITH SOME ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT WHICH MUST BE RESOLVED IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD. IN ISLAMABAD, THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT, THE TRAINING SCHEDULE AND POSSIBLE KICK-OFF DATES WERE DISCUSSED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL WITH MFA ADDITIONAL SECRETARY NAJMUDDIN SHAIKH, PRINCIPAL INFORMATION OFFICER YOUNUS SETHI (PAKISTANI LIAISON OFFICER DESIGNATE) AND SABAHUDDIN KUSKAKI, THE PROSPECTIVE HEAD OF THE AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY.] TALKS ABOUT THE TRAINING ASPECT OF THE PROJECT WERE ALSO HELD WITH CONCERNED OFFICIALS AT PAKISTAN TV. THE TWO-DAY VISIT TO PESHAWAR FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON GETTING A FEEL FOR THE PLACE, LOOKING AT THE JAMIAT TV PROJECT AND OTHER PARTY NEWS OPERATIONS, AND DISCUSSING NEWS GATHERING WITH SOME OF THE OTHER PLAYERS ON THE MEDIA SCENE. ATTEMPTS IN BOTH ISLAMABAD AND PESHAWAR TO LINK UP WITH THE GERMAN TRAINING PROJECT PROVED FRUSTRATINGLY UNSUCCESSFUL AS NEITHER WE NOR THE GERMAN EMBASSY WERE EVER ABLE TO CONTACT THE ELUSIVE MR. TARTAROTTI. END SUMMARY.

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ACTION OFFICE NEA-03

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PP-01 PPFK-02 PPF-01 PDN-01 VBB-01 VBXG-01 VZXH-01
VBN-01 VBR-01 /024 AS 16

P 300530Z JUL 86

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUENIA/USIA VASNDG PRIORITY 4687

INFO RUENIC/SECSTATE VASNDG PRIORITY 5478

RUENIC/AMCONSUL PESHAVAR PRIORITY 5052

RUENOL/AMEMBASSY BOMH PRIORITY 2021

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 16286

USIA

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7. SHUTT WILL BE CARRYING THESE COST FIGURES BACK WITH HIM TOGETHER WITH ADDITIONAL DATA PROVIDED BY THE USIA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE AND WILL ATTEMPT TO COME UP WITH A MINIMUM STRUCTURE FOR THE START UP AND AN OUTLINE OF WHAT ADDITIONAL FUNDS HE WILL NEED. THE BALL IS NOW IN OUR COURT AND THESE ISSUES MUST BE ADDRESSED IMMEDIATELY. AT A MINIMUM, KUSHKAKI WILL HAVE TO BE PUT ON SALARY, GIVEN SOME KIND OF OFFICE SPACE AND PROVIDED WITH A SMALL STAFF BEFORE HE CAN GO OUT AND PRESENT HIMSELF TO THE ALLIANCE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD AS THE HEAD OF THE NEW AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY.

8. KUSHKAKI'S STRONG PREFERENCE TO SEE THE ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERED IN ISLAMABAD REFLECTS THE FACT THAT HE IS ALREADY HERE, BUT ALSO REAL (IF POSSIBLY DEBATABLE) CONCERNS ABOUT SECURITY AND A DESIRE TO AVOID ATTEMPTS BY VARIOUS ALLIANCE FACTIONS TO INFLUENCE THE OUTPUT OF THE AGENCY. WE HAVE BATTED THIS ONE BACK AND FORTH EXTENSIVELY OURSELVES AND AGREE THAT IT IS NOT A BLACK OR WHITE SITUATION. ALTHOUGH ANY ENTITY BASED IN ISLAMABAD WILL HAVE TO HAVE A PESHAVAR BUREAU AND HENCE MORE INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS, ISLAMABAD DOES HAVE SOME ADVANTAGES. IT IS WHERE THE TRAINING WILL TAKE PLACE AND IS A BETTER LOCATION FOR THE OUTWARD TRANSMISSION OF THE AGENCY'S PRODUCT. FINALLY, AS CHARLIE SHUTT PUT IT, THIS MAY BE THE PRICE WE PAY FOR HAVING KUSHKAKI AS THE HEAD OF THE AGENCY.

9. ANOTHER SUBJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE FURTHER STUDY, ALTHOUGH IT WAS TOUCHED UPON THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, IS THE ACTUAL MECHANISM FOR THE FUNDING OF THE AGENCY.

10. THE TALKS ON THE TRAINING PROGRAM PRODUCED, LIKEWISE, SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS, AND ALSO BROUGHT US FACE TO FACE WITH SOME MORE FINANCIAL REALITIES. I BELIEVE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SKIRTED THE "TRAINING OF TRAINERS" ISSUE IN A WAY THAT IS ACCEPTABLE BOTH TO MAITRE AND THE GOP. IN ESSENCE, THE TWO SIDES WILL WORK TOGETHER ON THE TRAINING PROGRAM AND THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND WILL DETERMINE THE EXACT INVOLVEMENT OF THE TRAINERS FROM BOTH SIDES. AS NOTED ABOVE, IT IS PROPOSED, AND AGAIN HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY MAITRE, THAT THE TRAINING BE DONE HERE IN ISLAMABAD, PROBABLY IN A RENTED FACILITY. THIS COULD POSSIBLY BE THE BUILDING THAT HOUSES THE NEWS AGENCY OR SOME OTHER PROPERTY. [SETHI, FOR EXAMPLE, SUGGESTED HIRING A SMALL HOTEL LOCATED NEAR THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY FOR SIX WEEKS.]

11. AS SOON AS KUSHKAKI IS OFFICIALLY IN PLACE, HE WILL APPROACH THE ALLIANCE LEADERS FOR CANDIDATES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM. KUSHKAKI AND MAITRE HAVE GONE OVER QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES AND KUSHKAKI WILL CONDUCT THE INITIAL SCREENING.

12. THE ORIGINAL PLAN WAS TO BEGIN THE TRAINING IN MID-SEPTEMBER, BUT A SNAG AROSE WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE PRINCIPAL PAKISTANI TRAINER, NISAR MIRZA, PAKISTAN TV'S TOP CAMERAMAN, HAD LONG-STANDING COMMITMENTS IN CHINA UNTIL MID-OCTOBER. AFTER MEETING AND DISCUSSING THE PROGRAM WITH MIRZA, MAITRE AGREED THAT MIRZA WAS BT
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P 300530Z JUL 86

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHIA/USIA VASHDC PRIORITY 4688

INFO RUENCR/SECSTATE VASHDC PRIORITY 5479

RUEHCR/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5053

RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY 2022

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 16286

USIA

FOR P/G, P/DN, NEA

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AND NEA AMB. DUNBAR

E.O. 12356: OADR

SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT: US CONSULTANTS' VISIT
WORTH WAITING FOR, PARTICULARLY IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY
OTHER SUITABLE CANDIDATE. MAITRE WAS, IN FACT, SO
IMPRESSED WITH MIRZA THAT HE HAS DECIDED TO DROP ONE
OF THE AMERICAN TRAINERS HE WOULD BRING OUT. THIS
WILL OFFER HIM A SMALL DEGREE OF ADDITIONAL
FLEXIBILITY IN HIS BUDGET, ONE THAT AT LEAST
PARTIALLY WILL BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE STAFF COSTS OF
THE PAKISTANIS INVOLVED. IT HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY
AGREED THAT MAITRE WILL BEGIN THE TRAINING PROGRAM IN
MID-OCTOBER AND MIRZA WILL JOIN IT AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE THEREAFTER. THE GOP HAS ALSO UNDERTAKEN TO
FIND COUNTERPARTS TO MAITRE'S OTHER TRAINERS.

13. THE SINGLE MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM ON THE
TRAINING SIDE IS EQUIPMENT. THERE IS COMPLETE
AGREEMENT THAT IT WAS POINTLESS TO BEGIN THE TRAINING
UNTIL THE TRAINEES HAD THE EQUIPMENT WITH WHICH THEY
WOULD BE WORKING. "IT'S LIKE TRAINING AN ARMY WITH
STICKS FOR GUNS," SOMEONE QUIPPED. WITH SOME
RELUCTANCE, MAITRE HAS DECIDED HE CAN WORK WITH THE
STILL CAMERAS SENT UNDER THE MCCOLLUM MECHANISM,
ASSUMING THAT LENSES CAN BE FOUND TO MATCH THE
LENSLESS BODIES WE NOW HOLD. (THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN
COVERED SEPTEL.) HOWEVER, A
DECISION MUST BE MADE SOON AS TO WHAT CAMERA
EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY OF LENSES MUST BE PURCHASED
AND SHIPPED TO ISLAMABAD EITHER BY THE NEXT
PROGRAM PLANE OR BY AIR. WHILE WAITING FOR THE
TRAINING PROGRAM, I HAVE BEEN THINKING OF
SOLUTIONS TO THIS PROBLEM.

14. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT, DESPITE PROBABLY
MORE PAKISTANI INVOLVEMENT THAN MIGHT BE IDEAL FROM
MAITRE'S POINT OF VIEW, IT IS PREFERABLE TO DO THE
TRAINING ON THE GROUND HERE. THE COSTS INVOLVED WERE
WOULD BE LESS THAN THE COSTS INVOLVED IN TAKING
TRAINEES OUT OF THE COUNTRY. THE PAKISTANIS BRING
CONSIDERABLE ASSETS, INCLUDING TRANSLATION SKILLS AND
A KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL CONDITIONS. WE ARE ALSO FAR
ENOUGH DOWN THE TRACK WITH KUSHKAKI THAT IT IS
UNCONCEIVABLE TO ME THAT HE WOULD SIT STILL FOR AN
ARRANGEMENT THAT HAD UNION AID OR SOME OTHER TOTALLY
ON-INVOLVED PARTY SELECT THE CANDIDATES FOR HIS
TRAINING PROGRAM. I THINK THE ONLY OPTION IS TO
REMAIN HERE IN PAKISTAN AND MAKE IT WORK. AFTER
HAVING SEEN MAITRE AND MIRZA TOGETHER, I THINK WE CAN

5. THE GERMAN CONNECTION REMAINS ELUSIVE HERE.
ALTHOUGH GERMAN CHARGE JURGEN GENL MET TWICE WITH
SHUTT AND MAITRE AND PROMISED ALL POSSIBLE HELP IN
ATTEMPTING TO COORDINATE THINGS, HIS EXPECTED
VISITORS NEVER SURFACED. BY CALLING EVERY HOTEL IN
TOWN, WE THINK WE KNOW WHERE TARTAROTTI IS STAYING,
BUT AS OF THE DRAFTING OF THIS CABLE HE HAD NOT
BOTHERED TO CALL BACK OR HAD NOT BEEN IN HIS ROOM TO
BE REACHED BY EITHER US OR THE GERMANS. LIKEWISE,
DESPITE CONSIDERABLE EFFORT, NONE OF US HAS YET TO
LAY EYES ON OR KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE TRAINEES FROM THE
GERMAN PROJECT WHO HAVE THEORETICALLY RETURNED. ON
THE LAST DAY SHUTT AND MAITRE WERE HERE, WE DID
MANAGE TO GET TOGETHER WITH THE AFGHAN DOCTOR WORKING
WITH UNION AID WHO HAD COORDINATED THE SELECTION OF
THE CANDIDATES. HE CONFIRMED WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW,
THAT THEY WERE BACK IN THE COUNTRY SOMEWHERE AND HE
THOUGHT SOME OF THEM COULD PROBABLY BE REACHED. HE
ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THEY WERE STILL AWAITING BOTH THE
ARRIVAL OF THEIR EQUIPMENT AND THEIR GERMAN TRAINERS
TO GO INTO THE NEXT STEPS OF THEIR PROGRAMS. IN THE
MEANTIME, WE HAVE LEARNED FROM CBS CAMERAMAN KURT
LOBECK, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED TO TOWN, THAT HE
EXPECTS TO TAKE TWO OF THE TRAINEES INTO AFGHANISTAN
TO WORK WITH HIM WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

16. COMMENT. THE SHUTT/MAITRE VISIT DID WHAT WE
HOPE IT WOULD DO. IT SERVED AS A CATALYST TO GET
THE PAKISTANIS MOVING, AND MOVING THEY ARE. IT ALSO
BROUGHT US FACE TO FACE WITH THE FINANCIAL REALITIES
OF THE PROJECT. SHUTT AND MAITRE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC PRIORITY 4689

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5480

RUEHCR/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5054

RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY 2023

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 ISLAMABAD 16286

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SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT: US CONSULTANTS' VISIT
(AS DO I) THAT THE PROJECT IS DOABLE, ALTHOUGH IT IS
CLEARLY NECESSARY FOR US TO COME UP WITH SOME QUICK
ANSWERS ON BOTH THE VIDEO EQUIPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND PERSONNEL COSTS TO BE MET HERE ON THE GROUND.
THIS WILL BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF SHUTT'S AND MAITRE'S
REPORT BACK TO YOU WHEN THEY RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

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